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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Wednesday, February 5, 1941.

Subject: "WARDROBE PLANNING," Information from the Extension Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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In many home demonstration clubs for farm women "wardrobe planning" is a new type of clothing project. That is, instead of doing much actual sewing on garments at meetings, or even laying out sewing to be done at home, the women now want to talk about how to fit the entire family wardrobe into a limited budget, yet make as good an appearance as possible. In some parts of the country the clothing budget may be as little as \$75 or \$100 for the entire family. But even so, with America coming to the fore in fashion design, this growing interest in style and appearance is in line with the times.

It's not only the women and girls who want to stretch their clothing dollars to best advantage. Men and boys are also interested in suggestions on clothes and general grooming. Let's have a look at the clothing projects in different parts of the country.

In the State of Texas each demonstrator in a clothing project agrees to take inventory, put all clothing into good condition, plan the clothing for the year to come for herself and all her family, keep records of clothing expenditures and provide adequate storage space. This means studying her clothing needs and meeting them. She agrees to make at least part of her own clothing. These are good clothing practices for anyone to apply.

The Maryland State clothing specialist says the clothing project in her state is planned as a definite contribution to the program for better family living. If you want to plan a wardrobe as recommended in the Maryland home demonstration clubs,



you begin by making an inventory of the clothing on hand and its cost. You do this for each member of the family. Decide which garments are in usable condition, which can easily be made to do a little longer.

Then make a list of the new articles needed this year. Estimate their probable cost from past records, if you kept them. If you have to buy an expensive item like a girl's coat that may last for three or four years, the real cost for the current year will only be a third or a fourth of what you now pay out. But if that sum is too large for your budget, perhaps you could save on the cost of the coat by making it yourself.

Maryland home demonstration club members like to plan a three-year color plan as a wardrobe economy. For example, if dark green is a club member's basic color this spring, she combines it not only with harmonizing shades of green, and flower prints, but also with more or less beige or grey in dresses, blouses, or accessories. Then, another year, she can wear the grey things against a background of blue or black, or combine the beige or tan with black, brown or blue. When making a third change, she introduces some other color with the black, brown, or blue background. The result of that color planning is a harmonious wardrobe instead of a hodge podge of colors. She wears the same accessories -- gloves, purses and scarfs, -- with several different outfits.

A special unit on "Buying for Men" was a popular clothing project in Maryland last year, since many women select their husbands' and sons' shirts, ties, pajamas, and underwear. Also, in 1939, 32 boys enrolled in a short course in grooming and clothing selection.

Turning to a report from a far-western state,-- Washington, -- we find wardrobe planning again to the fore. At the Kittitas County fair, the women's club had an exhibit showing two wardrobes, each bought for ten dollars. In the first, the





whole ten dollars was spent for yard goods, which were made up at home. This wardrobe included 2 rayon afternoon dresses, 1 cotton blouse, 1 house dress, a wool skirt and jacket made from old material with new lining and buttons, and 3 pieces of rayon underwear. Contrasted with this fairly complete set of garments was the other ten dollar wardrobe, bought entirely ready-made. In it were just 2 dresses and 3 pieces of underwear. The lesson is obvious to those who have the time, skill and equipment for home sewing.

At the Whatcom County fair in Washington, club demonstrators showed how a change of accessories made one outfit serve 4 occasions. There's an idea here for any woman trying to stretch her clothing budget. The Washington report also mentions great interest in a personal appearance class for boys, in which they learned to choose clothes for quality and color, also how to press their own trousers and ties and care for their clothing.

In North Dakota farm women have been hard hit by drought and dust storms, and have had to depend to a large extent on making or renovating their clothing themselves. Nevertheless, believing that what little money is available should buy good value, the extension workers in this state also present consumer information about yard goods and ready-mades to their club members.

The clothing program in Massachusetts includes the better buying of ready-to-wear garments, but for a special reason it also helps a number who want to do home sewing. Massachusetts and some other States have many textile factories. Women can often buy good mill end materials very cheaply. So it's commonsense and good economy for them to make use of those inexpensive fabrics. So the extension projects in these States give more help with dress-making than in states where there is but little difference between the cost of materials and the price of ready-to-wear garments.

Wise buying of ready-made clothes is not neglected, however. One home demonstration agent formulated these buying suggestions: 1. Know what you can spend. 2. Shop when you feel fit. 3. Decide whether you should buy fashion or staple qualities. 4. Know what definite qualities you want and ask for them. 5. Consider how long the purchase must last. 6. Question sales people about hidden and obvious qualities. 7. Read the labels.

With these points from the Massachusetts extension service, we'll end for today. Questions and answers on garden subjects tomorrow.

